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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPG #0320 1441543  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 231543Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0339  
INFO RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0108

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000320

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WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/23/2013  
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREF](#) [CU](#) [EZ](#) [XG](#)  
SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC: REVIEW FOR WAIVER OF TITLE III OF  
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. PRAGUE 309  
[1](#)B. STATE 52542  
[1](#)C. PRAGUE 305  
[1](#)D. PRAGUE 289  
[1](#)E. PRAGUE 277  
[1](#)F. PRAGUE 246  
[1](#)G. PRAGUE 138  
[1](#)H. PRAGUE 125  
[1](#)I. PRAGUE 118  
[1](#)J. 07 PRAGUE 1250  
[1](#)K. 07 PRAGUE 1224

Classified By: POLEC Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) The Czech Republic's active engagement and support for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba since our last update related to the Libertad Act (Ref J), remains strong. Former Czech President Vaclav Havel established the Czech government's principled position on Cuba during his administration, following the Czech Republic's own transition from a totalitarian regime in 1989.

All subsequent Czech political leaders have continued this policy of support for the peaceful democratic dissident movement in Cuba and have consistently called for the release of all political prisoners. The Czech Republic has referred to the transfer of power between Fidel and Raul Castro as "just a formal confirmation of the status quo" in public statements (Ref H), while calling for Cuba to release all political prisoners, open dialogue with the opposition and hold a free election. The MFA Department for Human Rights and Transition Policy has identified Cuba as one of its "priority countries," and thus provides financial assistance to Czech NGOs, such as People in Need, which provides humanitarian aid, capacity training, and other support for journalists, dissidents and their families.

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Czech Leadership within the EU  
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[1](#)2. (C) Within the EU, the Czech Republic remains one of our strongest allies on human rights issues, particularly with respect to Cuba. Over the last several months, the Czechs have hosted public events with dissidents from Burma, Belarus, Iran, Cuba and Turkmenistan. In addition to working-level meetings with MFA officials, Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg has also publicly met with Cuban dissidents. Since our last update, our Czech counterparts have regularly engaged other EU member states in an attempt to rally EU support for maintaining the "June Restrictive Measures." Among EU countries, the Czechs are also one of the strongest supporters of the policy of inviting Cuban dissidents to National Day festivities.

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No Substantive Czech Trade or Investment  
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¶3. (U) The Czech Republic does not have any foreign investments in Cuba. As an EU member state, the GOCR does not have any bilateral trade agreements, including with Cuba. There are, however, no trade restriction on private companies that want to do business in Cuba. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MPO), private trade between the two nations fell significantly from USD 34.15M in 2006 to USD 23.62M in 2007. During the first three months of 2008, Czech trade with Cuba stands at USD 6.75M. There are no student exchange programs.

¶4. (C) Comment: A waiver of the right to bring an action against entities and nationals of the Czech Republic is necessary to U.S. national interests. The Czech Republic has been at the forefront of efforts to force the Cuban regime to meet international standards of human rights. Our cooperation would definitely be negatively affected if the GOCR were to lose the Title III waiver, especially since it has been one of our best partners on Cuba, and certainly the Czechs have one of the highest profiles within the EU on promotion of human rights issues around the world.  
Graber